

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

L A N C A S T E R,

Before the HONORABLE

HENRY BATHURST

One of the JUDGES of His MAJESTY'S Court
of Common-Pleas,

AT THE

A S S I Z E

Held MARCH 30th 1766.

Published at the Request of the High-Sheriff and
Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury

By R. RAVALD M. A.
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TO
THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
EDWARD GREGGE Esq;
HIGH-SHERIFF of the
County Palatine of LANCASTER;
AND TO THE
Gentlemen of the GRAND-JURY,

Sir William Horton Bart.	Richard Whitehead Esq;
Harbord Harbord Esq;	Joseph Pickford Esq;
John Gore Booth Esq;	Edward Byrom Esq;
Edward Clayton Esq;	Dorning Rasbotham Esq;
John Sunderland Esq;	Lawrence Rawstorne Esq;
Robert Radcliffe Esq;	Thomas Lees Esq;
Ashton Lever Esq;	John Parr Esq;
William Hulton Esq;	Henry White Esq;
John Howarth Esq;	George Birch Esq;

THIS DISCOURSE,
Published at their Request,
Is, with all Respect, INSCRIBED,

By their obedient Servant,

R. RAVALD.



I THESS. iv. 11.

*That ye study to be quiet, and to do
your own Business.*

THERE is nothing in which the superior excellence of the Christian Religion is more manifest, than in those Rules of civil or oeconomic Prudence which it every where inculcates.—It was the exalted design of its divine Author, to raise his Followers to the utmost Degree of Perfection, that our nature is capable of in this Life; and with this Intention, that they should be supplied with Rules and Maxims to direct their Conduct, in every Situation and Circumstance incident to them.

THOSE two Precepts contained in the Text
regard

regard us in our civil Capacity; but are so eminently useful, as to extend to almost every Duty, resulting from that complicated Connection.—As Parents and Masters, they enjoin that industrious Attention to our several Callings, which is necessary for the comfortable Support of our Offspring and Dependents.—As Neighbours, that kind, tractable and benevolent Disposition, which rejoices to make every one easy and happy about us.—And, as Subjects, that peaceable Submission to Government, which is absolutely necessary to the Ends of it, and for promoting its wise and salutary Purposes.

THESE then are Duties, which can never be unseasonably recommended from the Place where I now am; but, at all Times, are Subjects highly befitting the Ministers of the Gospel, and which may deservedly exhaust the Eloquence of its most eminent Professors. But never more so, than upon the Return of these Solemnities; when the Ministers



Ministers of Justice appear, tho' with reluctant Severity, to take Cognizance of those rash Deviations from them, which hardened and impenitent Offenders are guilty of.

BUT let me not be so misunderstood, if, in the Prosecution of this Discourse, I am led to animadvert upon the destructive Consequences of such Offences, and thence to vindicate the just Severity of Law, as if it was meant to give an Edge and Keenness to its Awards. Sure I am, our Law, like that benevolent Principle from whence it is derived, and under whose kind Influence, it is planned, "hopeth, "believeth, and" almost "endureth, all Things:" And therefore all unnecessary, all unavoidable Severity is as inconsistent with its true and genuine Spirit, as it is repugnant to the Humanity and Candor of its Interpreters.

THE Doctrines in the Text, it was observed, respect our social Connections; and prescribe two Duties, of the utmost Consequence

to public and private Happiness: A diligent and industrious Attention to the Business and Demands of our own several Stations; and a peaceable and quiet Behaviour towards others. I choose to invert the Order in which they are placed by the Apostle, because, I think, the former may be looked upon as almost a Consequence of the latter.—A Man who has all, or the greatest Part of his Time and Attention taken up, in pursuing the Concerns of his own proper Business and Employment, will have little Leisure or Inclination for interfering in those of his Neighbour; less still, for petulantly obtruding himself into those of the Public, which are so remote from his Knowledge or Inspection.—But to proceed—

“To do his own Business,” to be employed in some useful occupation, is a Duty so incumbent on, and essential to every Member of Society, considered as such, that otherwise 'tis scarcely possible to conceive, how it should flourish, or indeed almost subsist. This is that Compact,

Compact, which, if not expressed, yet is virtually implied, in the Original of every civil Association. For if we consider the primary Ends which may be supposed to have first given Birth to Society, and to have collected Mankind, of themselves the most helpless and indigent part of the Creation, into Bodies; we shall find them to have been those of mutual Protection and Accommodation. That each Individual betaking himself to that, for which, from Genius and Circumstances, he was best adapted, the Abilities of the Whole might be employed to the utmost advantage.—Agreeable to this Representation is that beautiful Description of the Apostle.—“ The Body is not one Member, but many;” which God has adjusted and disposed of, in such a Manner, as it has pleased him. Each indeed of different Magnitude and Importance, yet all necessary to the Health and Vigor of the Whole. Nay such is their mutual Relation to one another, and the Force and Importance of that Tie by which they are linked together; that “ the Eye cannot say

“ to the Hand, I have no Need of thee; nor
 “ the Head to the Feet, I have no need of
 you.”—From this beautiful Arrangement,
 the whole Structure “ fitly framed together,
 “ and compacted by that which every Joint
 “ supplieth, according to the effectual Work-
 “ ing in the Measure of every Part, maketh
 “ Increase of the Body, unto the Edifying of
 “ itself in Love.”—To this we owe all the
 Conveniencies, nay almost all the Necessaries
 of Life. Hence has arisen that beautiful
 Train of Arts and Sciences, which are at once
 the Ornament and Strength of a Community.
 And hence too those tender and endearing
 Acts of Urbanity, which smooth and sweeten
 the Intercourse of Life; and which generally
 have been found to increase in the same Pro-
 portion, in which those politer Improvements
 have advanced.—A Society thus happily “ at
 “ Unity in itself;” so admirably constituted
 in it’s internal Frame, as to have all it’s Parts
 in due Subordination to one another, and, in
 their Application, all jointly concurring to
 the

the general Welfare: Such a Society cannot be wanting in that Part only which remains to compleat it's Character, a due Sense of it's Dependence on God, and an anxious Care to interest his watchful Providence in it's Favor. Religion here will be considered as that only which can give Success and Stability to the best concerted Measures, and it's Ordinances therefore observed with a conscientious Respect.

BUT, if we invert this beautiful Scene, if we suppose each Member let loose from that sacred Tie which linked the Whole together, and no longer influenced by a Regard to his own, or the general Advantage.—If, in the Place of Industry, Frugality and Temperance we substitute their opposites Indolence, Luxury and Excess; what more is wanting to compleat the Destruction of such a Community? Arts and Sciences fade and perish, and Want and Desolation reign with unbridled Sway. “The whole Head is sick and the whole Heart

"Heart faint." There is neither Wisdom to plan, nor Courage to execute; but, infected alike with the general Contagion, "from the Sole of the Foot even unto the Head there is no Soundness in it." Nor is it possible to be so wanting in Duty to itself, without, at the same Time, withdrawing that, which it owed to it's Maker. In this Respect too therefore, "how is the faithful City become an Harlot!" How prostitute in Principle, as well as Practice! "It was full of Judgment, Righteousness lodged in it, but now Murderers."

THESE are Representations, which, tho' purely ideal, and such perhaps as never did, nor can probably exist in any mere human Establishments, yet are not altogether without their Use; as the former may serve to remind us of that Standard of Perfection, for which we were designed, and to which it is our Duty to be continually approaching; the other, that shocking Sink of Destruction and Misery,

Misery, where our Vices are perpetually precipitating us. Tho' two opposite Extremes, yet they serve to shew us the immediate Tendency of every Instance of publick and private Virtue and Vice; and therefore direct to a proper Application of those Means, which every Society is invested with, for its Security and Protection.

'Tis true indeed, in every well appointed Government, as in every sound and vigorous Constitution, the Effects of some slight Indisposition may not, at first, be so sensibly felt, or have so fatal a Tendency, as to strike at its Vitals: I will, on the contrary, suppose its Virulence and Poison may be thrown off in the ordinary Circulation, without having Recourse to any painful Methods of Cure. Yet if permitted to return, or extend its Influence farther, the Constitution becomes insensibly impaired, and at last is scarcely preserved by the Abilities and Skill of the most consummate Physician.—But, to speak without a Figure;
D where

where a Member of Society neglects his Duty, or acts out of it, he contributes so far to its Ruin and Subversion; and there must ensue a Defect and a Mischief as extensive as the Influence of his Station.

HENCE therefore the necessity of Penal Laws; which are to the political, what Physick is to the natural Body; both irksome and painful in their Operation, but both necessary to Health. In the due Execution of which, consists the Excellency of their Character, to whom is delegated that Part of the Supreme Authority.

To “minister true Judgment unto the “People”—to respect no Man’s Person—to extend Mercy to every deserving Object, yet still to keep in View that supreme Part of it, which is due to the Publick—these are some of the Out-lines of a Character which I have but faintly touched, and which indeed ’tis as unnecessary

unnecessary, as it would be invidious to delineate more fully.

I hasten then to the second Branch of Duty prescribed in the Text, which was meant to regulate our Conduct and Behaviour towards others; and enjoins a quiet, peaceable and inoffensive Deportment, towards their Persons, Properties and Characters.

THIS Duty indeed is here introduced with some Qualification, we are not absolutely and expressly required to be quiet, but that we study to be so. This implies not only in general a Difficulty, but sometimes an utter Impossibility, in the Discharge of it; arising too not so much perhaps from any Disinclination in ourselves, as the unaccountable Humours and Tempers of others. The Apostle knew full well there were Characters in the World, of so perverse and diabolical a Nature, as to return Hatred for Good-Will; who were so far from being influenced, or worked upon

upon, by the most obliging Condescensions, that these served only as so many Encouragements to Injury and Oppression.—It was a Treatment like this, that extorted from the Psalmist those pathetic Complaints: “Wo
“ is me, that I am constrained to dwell with
“ Mesech, and to have my Habitation among
“ the Tents of Kedar! My Soul hath long
“ dwelt among them that are Enemies to
“ Peace! I labour for Peace, but, when I
“ speak unto them thereof, they make them-
“ selves ready to Battle.”

BUT, tho’ this may sometimes be the Case, yet in general ’tis otherwise.—A soft Answer will, for the most part, turn away Wrath; at least ’tis the most probable Method to produce so happy an Effect: But should it sometimes fail to do so, yet the Generality of the Rule can hardly be affected by a few Exceptions.—The Apostle then must be allowed to have effectually consulted the Peace, the Happiness and Repose of the World, when he commands

mands us to cultivate those Dispositions which have a direct Tendency to promote them. And it must be either a gross Neglect of such excellent Advice, or the Prevalence of vicious Propensities, that can deprive it of such invaluable Blessings.—For thus another inspired Writer has taught us to reason: “From whence come Wars and Fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your Lusts.”—To check and restrain these then is as much a part of good Policy and true Patriotism, as it is of “pure and unfeigned Religion:” And he must be equally regardless of his present and future Felicity, that can submit his Conduct to the Direction of such blind impetuous Guides.

THE several Ways, in which we violate this divine Precept, are as various, as the Passions themselves which lead to and suggest them.—But, without descending to too minute a Detail, some of them are so criminal in their Nature, and so pernicious in
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their Consequences, as to demand our Animadversion.

FIRST then they must ever be deemed the most desperate Offenders against the Duty in the Text, who violently invade the Person or Property of another; who either at once deprive him of Life itself, or despoil him of those Accommodations which only perhaps could make it a Blessing. These are Crimes of so enormous a Size, and so deep a Dye, such daring Insults upon Government, and so subversive of its very Foundation, as to call for its severest Resentment. “ They
“ are Iniquities, each, to be punished by the
“ Judge.” Leaving them therefore in the Hands of those, to whom the Supreme Power has so wisely committed them; who can best discern their several Natures and Degrees, together with those Circumstances which either add Horror, or excite Compassion; and who are vested with sufficient Power to render to each according to his Deserts, I proceed.—

To

To another Species of Guilt, which, tho' not equally cognizable before a Court of Judicature with the former, yet is equally offensive to Society and to the Apostolical Injunction: I mean the secret Attacks of the Whisperer and Slanderer.—“A good Name” says Solomon, “is preferable to great Riches.” To many indeed it is instead of, and answers all the Purposes of the most ample Fortune; as it enables them, to pursue their several Callings, with Reputation and Success. But even those, whose Rank and Fortune place them in a Situation above depending upon it for a Subsistence; even these, however amply provided with external Accommodations, cannot be insensible of the Pleasure arising from the Esteem of others. This can give a Lustre to the most exalted Stations; nay can add Dignity even to Virtue itself.—

To Men therefore who retain a Sense of “What is lovely and of good Report,” and such

such surely every one does who has the least Remains of Honor or Integrity about him, a good Name will be considered as the most valuable part of his Possessions; which he will guard with the most watchful Care; nor suffer to be ravished from him, but with Life itself.—But, what Care, what Resolution is necessary, to guard it against the insidious Attacks of “the Pestilence that walketh in “Darkness!” What Precaution sufficient, to screen it from the Treachery of those, who, under the Garb of Friendship, more effectually meditate its Destruction!—“It was “not an open Enemy,” says the Psalmist, “that “did me this Dishonor,” for then I might have thought of some Method of Defence, or “peradventure I could have hid “myself from him; but it was even thou, “my Companion, my Guide, and my own “familiar Friend.”—It cannot have escaped the Observation of any one, the Mischief, the Distraction and Confusion occasioned by Men of this Character, who are at once a
Disgrace

Disgrace to our Nature, and the Pests of Society.

BUT, thirdly, besides the Instances already mentioned, in which we directly attack and outrage our Neighbour, we may likewise offend against the Rule in the Text, by too rigorous Methods of defending ourselves.— It is doubtless the Intention of Law, both divine and human, that Mankind should be secure from all hostile Attempts on one another; nay should enjoy the peaceable Possession of every Thing they can, by any sort of Right, call their own. This is agreeable to the Plan of Perfection in which we were originally formed; but the Corruption and Depravity, since introduced into our Nature, has altered and deformed that original Plan. We now find from experience, that in the several Interferings that are in the World, “ it must
“ needs be that Offences come.” And the Religion of Christ, which arose since that Alteration, and is altogether accommodated to

it, hath taken in this Consideration, and sufficiently provided for it, by pressing upon us the Duties of mutual Compassion and Forbearance. We are there commanded as "the Elect of God," if we have any Title or Pretensions to that Character, or the Blessings and Promises that attend it, "to put on
 "Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Meekness and
 "Long-Suffering; forbearing one another and
 "forgiving one another, if any Man have a
 "Quarrel against any."—And what shall we say then of those vindictive Appeals to Courts of Justice, which are so often made, and upon such slight Provocations! If, in the Apostle's Opinion, there be a fault when Men go to Law at all, (as doubtless in general there is, on one Side or other) surely it must have every Aggravation attending it, when we make it a Cover only for our Malice and Resentment; which too we seek every frivolous Occasion of gratifying.—How far these Passions may be excited or sharpened, by the infamous Arts of unworthy Practitioners, I leave

leave to the Consideration of those, who, I doubt not, are both able and willing, and, I am sure, from every Tie of Honor and Conscience, are obliged to discountenance them.

LASTLY, we trespass against the Laws of Peace, when, by artful Insinuations and false Suggestions, we vilify and traduce the Measures of Government, or asperse the Characters of those by whom it is administered.—There is a Sort of Sacredness affixed to particular Persons and Things, which therefore it becomes a kind of Sacrilege to violate and prophane.—“Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People,” is a Maxim, the Reasonableness and Propriety of which Saint Paul could not but subscribe to, even at the Time he was experiencing the most unjust and insolent Effects of his Power. And indeed 'tis the general Doctrine of our Lord and his Apostles, every where insisted on throughout the sacred Writings, to pay an
external

external Respect to Magistracy, whether Supreme or Subordinate; and this "not only to the good and gentle, but," in some Measure, "also to the froward." And, if we advert to the Reason, we shall easily see the Expediency of it. For they are all, in some Respect, "the Ministers of God to us for Good;" since Government of any Kind, however founded or administered, must be preferable to a State of Anarchy and Confusion.

But if the sacred Writers have thought fit, for Reasons of civil Prudence, thus to guard the Persons and Characters of Rulers and Magistrates, even those who act in a Manner sometimes inconsistent with the high Trust reposed in them: Surely we of this Nation must be inexcusably culpable, when, under the best civil Establishment and the most mild Administration, we are led to "speak evil of Dignities:" When we wantonly sow the Seeds of Dissention; or endeavour, by injurious Imputations, to dissolve that Tie
which

which binds and cements the whole Political Structure.

“It was a Saying of Socrates, That although no Man undertakes a Trade he has not learned, even the meanest; Yet every one thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all Trades, that of Government.” Such is the Petulance and Licentiousness of the Age, that Men intrude into the Mysteries of State, canvass and arraign the Actions of their Superiors, nay dare “to speak evil of those Things which they know not, of which indeed ’tis impossible they should have an adequate Knowledge; and this, with as little Ceremony, as they use in their most ordinary domestic Concerns. As if Government were the only Science in which Abilities were of no Advantage; and its intricate Connections, its secret Movements and Springs were better adapted to the low Talents of every impertinent Intruder, than the Wisdom and Prudence of those, who, by a proper

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Course of Study, have qualified themselves for the arduous Undertaking; and, from every Consideration of Duty, Honor and Interest, are “ continually attending on this very “ Thing.

THE Consequences to the Community, from such a Temper and Spirit, are obvious and Natural. They directly strike at those Distinctions, which are so wisely established among the different Orders of Men—They destroy that mutual Confidence, which should subsist, between the Prince and People; and in a Word, sap the Foundation of all Civil Power.

“ MARK them,” as the Apostle directs, “ them that cause Divisions and Offences “ contrary to the Doctrine which Ye have “ learned; and avoid them, For they that “ are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, “ but their own Belly; and by good Words “ and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of “ the Simple.—

WHATEVER

WHATEVER their Pretences may be, their Practices are directly repugnant to all Religious Principles. For these are both "pure" and "peaceable; without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy."—They command us to "submit to every Ordinance of Man; to the "King, as Supreme;" and "unto Governors," as acting under his immediate Commission.—In a Word, to "render to all, "their Dues—Fear to whom Fear—Honor to whom Honor."

To conclude then, let us all endeavour to form our Social Conduct agreeably to these Divine Precepts; and so demean Ourselves, in every Relation of Life, that when this our Earthly Jerusalem shall be no more, or at least our temporary Connections with it shall cease, we may obtain an Inheritance in that which is Above; that "City which hath "Foundations," eternal Foundations, "whose "Builder and Maker is God."

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